

What We Know by yeahthathappens

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Nancy/Jonathan

What We Know

It's been years, but I finally found something in me that I feel is worth sharing. Who knows, maybe this will be the first of many new stories, and updates to come! Enjoy, and if you feel compelled, reviews are appreciated

What We Know

Steve Harrington always knew it was only a matter of time before Nancy got wise and decided to break things off.

When asked, Nancy had always said that they weren't a couple. Even after they'd had sex. Honestly, Steve thought he'd lost her the very next day when she was so nervous at school, and seeing Johnathan Byers in her room had torn him up inside more than he liked to admit. Nancy had just been so genuine (and BYERS of all people!). But even after he realized what a jerk he'd been and tried to help - even after Will was found and everything went back to normal - even after Steve came over to meet her parents at Christmas - Nancy Wheeler pursed her lips and frowned and declared, "No Dad, Steve and I aren't like that."

Steve tried to act like it didn't bother him. Her mom winced and gave him a look of pity, while her little brother, Mike, seemed pleased - but neither of them commented. Steve ignored these as well, determined to make a good impression. Nancy had been through a lot, and he got that. If she wasn't ready then he could wait. Nancy was a girl worth waiting for.

It wasn't long before Steve realized that Johnathan had already come to the same conclusion.

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Johnathan always knew when something was wrong with Nancy Wheeler. It was something he noticed when they were kids, playing in her parents' basement with their little brothers before Barb moved in to town. Whenever Nancy felt uncomfortable or upset, but didn't

want anyone to know, she would take a deep breath through her nose, glance around for available exits, smile and make excuses, and finally sigh quietly when she had an out.

Johnathan was a year older than her, but Nancy was so smart that she skipped a grade in middle school. Once they reached high school and it was clear that they weren't going to be the kind of friends that talked about sleepovers with their younger brothers – or talked at all – Johnathan was relieved. He felt uneasy knowing that Nancy didn't like seeing her dad try to kiss her mom, or that she was terrified of snakes, or how much she hated seeing Mike cry. It made Johnathan want to reach out to her, which seemed wrong to him, even back then.

But it seemed that he was still able to pick up on her unease, even from afar – like that night at Steve's. No matter what she said, Nancy wasn't sure she wanted to be there.

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Nancy knew it was wrong to compare Steve and Johnathan, but sometimes, her mind would betray her.

Steve Harrington was the kind of guy any teenage girl would feel lucky to be with. He was popular, handsome, rich, funny, and sometimes - when he thought no one was looking - he could be incredibly sweet.

Johnathan Byers was the kind of guy that stayed in the background, and not just because the other kids would knock tease and knock his books down. He liked standing on the edges. Crowds always had made him nervous, even when they were kids. Nancy couldn't imagine any girls drawing hearts around his picture in the yearbook... and yet...

Steve didn't remember her birthday. He just waltzed into school and carried on as if everything was normal. Nancy dropped hints all day. She hoped that he was just pretending and actually had some big romantic surprise planned, but he wasn't that good of an actor. He'd forgotten, and at the end of sixth period, Nancy was too frustrated to deal with his perplexed looks. She huffed and asked Johnathan for a

ride home, before storming off to the parking lot.

"What is her problem today man? Is she on her period or something?" she heard Steve ask Johnathan.

She also heard the other boy sigh and could imagine the way he rolled his eyes, but she refused to turn around and look.

"It's her birthday. Just drop by her house later, and say you were pretending all day. That it's a surprise... or something."

Nancy didn't hear anything else. She marched all the way to Johnathan's car and waited stubbornly. It didn't take long for him to catch up. Neither of them spoke for the first half of the trip to her house. In fact, Nancy was considering including Johnathan in her silent treatment of Steve, even though she knew it wasn't fair. But then she saw a scrap of ribbon out the corner of her eye.

"Are you going to let Steve take credit for that too?" she asked. Then she winced at how bratty she sounded.

Johnathan just smirked and rolled his eyes. "No, I'll just save it for next year. You don't have a birthday this year. Must have missed it." *(He never teased her about her grades, or ideas like Steve did. Johnathan was more subtle.)*

Nancy was already reaching into the backseat to retrieve the gift. It was small, and wrapped in newspaper with a pink ribbon tied around it. She tried to stay angry, but really, she was just sad and disappointed. How could Steve forget? She had been mentioning the date and hinting to him all month long. The ribbon came loose under her nimble fingers, followed swiftly by the local tribune's page 5. Then came the tears, and the lump in her throat that she tried to choke down. It was a framed picture of her and Barb from last year. She didn't know how Johnathan had gotten the photo – he'd most likely taken it himself when neither girl was paying attention – but she didn't care.

"Thank you, Johnathan," she breathed. "It's perfect."

Johnathan knew Steve was a good guy too. Steve faced an

interdimensional monster with them, and braved going against the status quo of high school social status to stand up for Johnathan and Nancy when others would have spread rumors. He'd even pitched in to help clean up the blood, scorch marks, and bullet holes before Will came home from the hospital. He didn't deserve this betrayal.

Johnathan hated to think of this as a betrayal, but what else could it be called? He was in love with Nancy. He would do anything for her. How could such a wonderful thing feel so wrong?

By the end of the next summer, Steve knew it was time. He was going off to college, while Nancy chose to stay home, even though she had the grades and the means to join him. She had taken a job at the Hawkins Library. But he understood. Mike was still feeling the loss of Eleven, and with all their community had gone through last fall, Steve completely understood her reasons for the decision. Strange things were still happening in Hawkins, and Nancy needed to stick around for the fight.

"It's not like I can't apply next year, or whenever. Some people go back to school when they're our parents' age. And we can keep in touch! You have my phone number, and the number for the library, and Purdue is only a three hour drive away." She was rambling, holding his hand while they laid out on her roof one night, just outside her bedroom window. It had been months since he'd entered the room itself – having not been invited (another thing Steve understood. If anything, his love for the girl beside him felt more platonic these days).

"I just feel like a big phony, going off to college. I mean, you are at least twenty times smarter than me. You deserve to be there more than I do, Nance."

Nancy laughed and rolled her eyes. "As long as you don't say the Krebs's cycle is an STD again, I think you'll be fine."

"That was priceless and you know it!"

They laughed, and continued smiling when only silence remained. As the moon continued to rise into the night, Steve smiled, sighing

quietly. "It's okay, you know... I don't expect you to wait for me."

"Steve – "

"No, Nancy, I mean it," he turned his head to face her, smiling ruefully. "I don't want you to wait for me. I think we both deserve that much."

Even through the darkness, he could make out the tears welling in her eyes. "I loved you first," she whispered.

"I know."

Jim Hopper knew Nancy Wheeler was still well under the legal drinking age; and that, as sheriff, he SHOULD have taken her down to the station for processing – or at the very least call her parents... but he had done neither of those. Instead, when he found the girl taking lazy sips of scotch on Joyce Byers' front porch (and it was nobody's business at all what Sheriff Hopper was doing at the Byers residence at 8pm on a Thursday night), he just grunted and sat down next to her.

"You've got two choices kid," he said bluntly, "Talk, or share."

Nancy passed the bottle to him. It must have been her father's, because it was the good stuff. Glenlevit, aged for twelve years. Jim Hopper took a healthy swig, nodded his thanks to the girl, and handed it back before standing again. "Joyce and I are heading out soon, but Jonathan's on his way home from work."

Nancy raised the bottle in salute to show that she'd heard him, and with that, Hopper continued inside the house. He'd deal with *that* tomorrow.

Nancy didn't know what to do. Her first relationship had ended amicably, but bittersweet. Steve had left Hawkins over a month ago; and if the rumors were true, then his parents were getting a divorce and selling their house. The general consensus being that the Harrington clan was done with Hawkins for good. Of course, Steve promised to call, and that he would always be available to her when she needed a friend, but Nancy doubted she would ever see him

again. It was like losing Barb all over again.

She took another swig of her dad's scotch after Sheriff Hopper left her alone. The door was left open, so she could hear the back and forth between the two adults. Joyce wanted to cancel their plans and comfort Nancy, but Hopper insisted that it wasn't their place to do so that that Jonathan will handle it when he gets home. Nancy tried not to laugh when she heard Joyce continue to mutter quietly and insist on coffee and leaving snacks out – *"I'm not going to let that little girl drink scotch on an empty stomach, as tiny as she is! Oh my God I shouldn't even let her be drinking! Hopper!"*

"Will you just put that down and get your coat?"

They left soon after, with Joyce placing a kiss on Nancy's forehead and casting her sympathetic looks as they drove off. It was sweet. Nancy thought it made her liquor taste better. Then time started to slip by her again.

She didn't know how long she sat there, drinking until her heart felt numb on Jonathan Byers's front porch. In just a few months, it will have been a year since she'd battled a demon in this house. Funny that this was one of the few places she still felt safe.

"Nancy?"

Her eyes opened blearily, though she hadn't been aware of closing them... or laying down in front of the front door (even though it still remained open for her with Joyce's reassurances). Jonathan was kneeling in front of her. His gentle hand brushed her hair away from her face before resting on her forehead, as if checking for fever. She thought he looked beautiful, leaning over her with the porch light casting its soft orange glow over him. His shaggy hair still hung in his eyes, but she could see his concerned gaze turn amused when he noticed the half empty bottle next to her.

"I'm drunk," she admitted finally.

Jonathan snorted but said nothing. Instead, he took a step back. Before she could raise to stop him, the flash had gone off – blinding her – and he'd snapped a picture. Nancy groaned. She sat up, trying

to keep the frown on her face, but as Jonathan kept taking pictures and chuckling, she began to laugh as well. And later, when he scooped her into his arms and carried her to the bathroom where she could vomit her guts out, held her hair back and made her drink a large glass of water, before finally – finally – taking her to his bedroom and laying her down... Nancy realized what she must have known all along. Jonathan loved her as much as she loved him.